Interview with Claude Groce

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CLAUDE “CLIFF” GROCE

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Q: Cliff, if you will begin, please, by identifying yourself, your full name, address, serial number, and anything else that establishes who you are. That's the way to begin, perhaps.

Entrance Into VOA (Through Department of State): 1950

GROCE: My full name, regrettably, is Claude Bethany Groce, which is why I adopted the name Cliff many years ago when I went into radio. I decided, while I was still in college, that I wanted to work for the Voice of America, and so after getting a degree in radio broadcasting, I went back and got another degree in international relations.

I applied for an internship in the Department of State, hoping to work for the VOA, which was then a part of the Department of State, and was fortunate enough to be chosen as an alternate, and then wound up getting into the program.

I began work September 18, 1950, had three work assignments as an intern, first in the Bureau of European Affairs, the Division of East European Affairs, which was the backstop for the VOA. My second work assignment was in the Bureau of German Affairs, and the

third was with the Voice in its Washington branch, in the penthouse of the Interior Building in Washington.

Q: So you reported for duty to the Voice, technically, on what date again?

GROCE: April 7, 1951 was my first day as an intern. July 9 was my first day as a regular employee.

Early Assignment: Special Events Office in Washington While VOA Headquarters was Still in New York

Q: What was your first job at the Voice?

GROCE: I was a Special Events Officer. At that time, I started as a GS-6. The Washington branch consisted of a Special Events unit, a news unit, and some specialized writers.

Q: At that time, of course, the headquarters was in New York.

GROCE: Headquarters was in New York. So we were a very small, 18-people adjunct of the VOA in New York. There were two people in 1778, as it was then, Pennsylvania Avenue, attached to the IPS news operation, who wrote newscasts for broadcasts from Washington or transmission by teletype from Washington to the New York newsroom. We did two live newscasts a day from Washington.

The first day I was on duty, I was given the responsibility of broadcasting a 15-minute newscast to Europe in the afternoon, our time, evening European time. I hadn't been on the air in many months, and I was scared to death broadcasting to this kind of an audience, and it went off without a hitch.

We covered the Hill, we covered the departments, especially the State Department, obviously, in support of program elements in the foreign languages and English.

Q: Do you remember, Cliff, either the first or one of the first special events you covered?

GROCE: Oh, dear. I can remember highlights of the period; I can't remember the first. Oh, yes, I do! I remember the first interview I did was with the lobbyist—or a lobbyist—for the potato industry in the United States. [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter] Sounds exciting.

GROCE: Because one of the programs that the New York office was engaged in at the time was a study of how Americans, as private citizens, influence and affect the operations of the government that serves them. They wanted a lobbyist in the process, and, of course, Washington is the home of most of the lobbyists. So that was the first guy, now that you remind me.

I think the second person I interviewed was Howard Mitchell, music director of the National Symphony Orchestra, who was a princely gentleman, a very fine cello player, and an absolutely lousy orchestra director.

Q: Special Events led to what?

Groce Transferred to Motion Picture ServiceQuits Government Work

GROCE: I was in that job until the summer of 1953, when there came a gigantic RIF in the information program. John Foster Dulles had made it clear that he did not want anything to do with the information program; he wanted it out from under the State Department. Two studies were going on simultaneously in the executive branch of the government to come up with some alternative means of using this institution. It had been decided that a separate agency for information purposes would be set up on August 1, 1953.

In the big RIF, I was transferred. I was not RIFed because I had permanent status, but I was transferred to the Motion Picture Service of the State Department, IIA at

that time, the International Information Administration. I had been a GS-7 by the time I left VOA, although I'd been doing a GS-12 job, so I had been treated like one of the family. Suddenly, I found myself back in an almost clerical role in another part of the information program, and I was very unhappy in that role. So I decided to quit and go back to California, and I gave my two weeks' notice. They were very nice people working in the Motion Picture Service; it had nothing to do with the professional caliber of the people, but I just was in an unhappy position in that organization. So I chose, rather than to stay in that reassignment, to quit.

Significant Special Assignments Preceding Resignation

Q: Cliff, in reviewing your career so far, are there some instances that stand out of good doing, of poor doing?

GROCE: There were a number of interesting developments during this period. Of course, it was the beginning of the McCarthy era, but quite aside from that, since that was really affecting the New York operation of the Voice, the coverage of the Hill was one of the most interesting aspects. This is before we had a bureau. We were on sufferance, so that if we were using a booth, normally we would be assigned to the Mutual Broadcasting System booth to do our VOA recordings.

I shall never forget one time I was interviewing a senator, and about two minutes into the interview, the Mutual reporter showed up to do a two-minute spot, and we had to get out of the booth, and I lost my interview because the guy wasn't going to stay around that long.

There was another time in which I had tried to get Senator Theodore Francis Greene of Rhode Island. Remember him?

Q: Yes, indeed.

GROCE: He wound up staying until he was 96 years old or so. I scheduled him for an interview, and I had given him a time of 3:30 for the appointment. Well, in the meantime, while I was going around trying to find other senators to interview, Senator Greene showed up at 3:00 in the Senate radio-TV gallery. So when I got back about 25 minutes after 3:00, ready to greet him at 3:30 when he was due to arrive, he was sitting there in an absolute huff. I explained that I'd been seeking Senator So-and-so and Senator So-and-so, and I thought our agreement was for 3:30, and he stood up to his 4'8" height and said, "But I am a senator, too!" [Laughter]

I think one of the most interesting experiences I had during this period was in interviewing Jean Monnet, who was here for a conference.

Q: Will you identify him for the benefit of the readers?

GROCE: Jean Monnet was the father of European unity, in effect. He built the coal and steel community, and he was just one of the great men of a potentially united Europe. He was staying at the French Embassy while he was here for this meeting, and I scheduled an interview for 9:00 o'clock in the morning, the only time he could give me. The engineer and I arrived at the front door of the French Embassy and were ushered in by a butler, standing in the lobby of the place. And bounding down the curving stairway came a massive black French poodle, and I feared for our lives, but he was brought under control by the butler. We were escorted up this beautiful stairway into a little anteroom off the suite where Monnet was living. In a few minutes, here comes Monnet in his bathrobe, slippers, freshly shaven and powdered, and so I interviewed him in his bathrobe.

I was recently out of college and very impressed with my own knowledge of the situation in Europe, and I'd carefully written out eleven very well thought-out questions, very complicated, showing my erudition. I showed them to Monsieur Monnet, and he read them over, and he said, "This is much too complicated." He said, "These are very good questions, but your listeners have two interests, two concerns: Will we have peace? Will

we have bread? And everything we say must be addressed to one of those objects." And we sat there and rewrote the 11 questions into three, and it was a beautiful interview. The man was a superb subject, and I never forgot that lesson as long as I've been in the business.

It was interesting, back to the Hill, the difference between the attitudes of the people on the Hill—that is, the congressmen and the senators on the Hill—toward the Voice of America and its workers, as compared with the attitudes of the commercial broadcasters and the other commercial press people. We could not get credentials, we could not be members of the galleries. Everything was on sufferance, as I mentioned, the mutual booth. Not until the 1980s did the Voice get accreditation on the Hill.

Q: Can you remember the names of some of the people at the Voice that we should take note of? Who, for example, was director of the Voice in New York? And other names of people you can recall.

GROCE: When I joined the Voice, Foy Kohler was the director, who later became ambassador to Moscow. After Kohler, as I recall, the man who took over was "Doc" Morton. I don't remember his first name, but his nickname was "Doc." Maybe it was Erickson who preceded Morton. I'm very unclear about that period. I've got all kinds of conflicting information in my own files.

Morton would arrive at the morning meetings, the 9:30 policy meetings of the VOA staff in New York—again, I was in Washington, so this is all second-hand—and greet the assembled multitude with, "Good morning, warriors." Meaning, of course, cold warriors.

In the Washington branch, of which I was a part, Sid Sulkin was the chief. Head of the Special Events operation was John Hogan. His deputy was Keith Jameson. We also had specialized people who were not in the Special Events unit, but who wrote for the Far

East Division in New York or for other specialized operations. We had a man who wrote commentaries for broadcasts. We had our own policy office.

Q: Was Barry Zorthian around at that time?

GROCE: Barry was in New York. Yes, he was around, but he was in New York. I knew very few people in New York, because our work was strictly down here. I went up and did some filling in for Special Events people who were out on the road at times. There was a period during—I think it was the spring of 1953, shortly before I quit, it may have been '52, in which all the Special Events people in New York were on the road, somewhere in the United States for special coverages. The three of us Special Events officers who were assigned to the Washington office, Bill McCrory and Bob Redeen and myself, we had each of us two weeks in New York to fill in behind those people.

One of the most interesting experiences I had, I was doing interviews for a half-hour show they were going to do on the Empire State Building, and among others, I interviewed the president of the corporation, I interviewed the chief window washer, I interviewed the engineer who designed and supervised the construction of the television tower up on top. In fact, he took the VOA engineer and me out onto the roof of the Empire State Building, the metal roof, and I have acrophobia, normally, but I did not feel it then because the top of the building was so big, and the wind was blowing so hard, that you didn't feel that you were going to plunge off; you were just looking out.

In interviewing the chief window washer in the office of the president of the corporation, I asked about any memorable experiences he had had. He noted that he never would forget the time when this body came hurtling by him as he was on the 17th floor or something. [Laughter] And the corporation president, in a panic, was giving a signal to cut, cut, cut, cut! We excised that from the tape.

Q: He didn't recall seeing any large gorillas on the top?

GROCE: No. [Laughter]

Q: I'm sure there are many more, but shall we proceed to the post-August 1, 1953 part of your career?

Interlude As Graduate Student

GROCE: Well, it stopped being a career at that point, and I became a student at Berkeley again.

Q: I see. So pick up from there, please. How long did you stay at Berkeley?

GROCE: Well, actually, I went out not seeking to go to Berkeley, but to look for a job. When I was unsuccessful at finding a job in the San Francisco Bay area, I concluded that I'd go back and get a master's in international relations, because I was interested in getting back into international affairs. I went to school, again, in late '53 and stayed until early '55.

In the summer of '54, I took the State Department Foreign Service exam in San Francisco, at a time when it was still three and a half days you had to go through it. To my utter amazement, I passed it, but before I could come back to take the orals and the physical, I was offered a job to return to the Voice of America, which I accepted, and came back in February of '55.

Q: What was the job?

Reemployment at VOA—Now in Washington

GROCE: By that time, the broadcast operation had moved from New York to Washington. John Hogan had been the acting chief of the English operation in the closing days in New York, and he knew my work from the penthouse days, and he wanted to get me back in

if he could. I was very glad to come back to the Voice. I was a writer, broadcaster, editor, whatever.

Q: That lasted how long, Cliff?

Origination of “Music USA,” Long Popular Worldwide Jazz Music Program

GROCE: Within a matter of a few months of my return, Music USA, the wonderful jazz program done for many years now by Willis Conover; in the beginning done by Ray Michael during the week, and Willis on weekends, then Ray Michael on weekends, and Willis during the week. I don't know whether because John Wiggin, who had conceived the program, realized that Willis knew a lot more about jazz than Ray Michael did, but the idea of putting Music USA on had been to reach a youth audience in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe without being blatant about it or admitting it, and to talk about broadcasting to “Europe” as a whole, and especially northern Europe, Scandinavia.

Q: I think almost everyone would have to concede that Music USA has been one of the most spectacular successes of American radio. I'm interested in hearing you say that the idea was conceived by John Wiggin.

GROCE: Yes. He was the papa of Music USA.

Q: I know that a lot of people have taken credit, but I'm glad to hear it was John. John was a wonderful guy, a pretty good musician on his own.

GROCE: Whether John is the person who conceived of this as a means of reaching a youthful audience in the Soviet Union, I'm not sure. But he conceived of it as a program concept, and maybe somebody else decided that this would be useful for this particular purpose.

“Music USA” - Means of Reaching Youth in USSR

But after this had seemed to be successful in the early days, Barry Zorthian, who was program manager, concluded that we ought to have a feature program to go along with Music USA to reach the same East European-Soviet audience, those people who understood the English language.

So a number of us were asked to come up with proposals for the program, one hour a day, preceding Music USA, which was then two hours a day. So I wrote up a considerable plan, proposed a title for the show, proposed varying formats for the show, and I was very pleased that most of my ideas were accepted, my title was accepted, the format was accepted. The problem was we didn't have enough people to do this ambitious one-hour-a-day program. It really required a massive amount of work.

When it was concluded that this was the way we were going to go, I was assigned the responsibility of “coordinating” the program. It was not called editor; it was not called producer. I had to supervise the writer, the editor, the producer, and all the people who put the thing together. But basically, I did most of the work myself.

After two weeks on the air, I wrote a memorandum to my boss, who sent it on to Barry Zorthian. My boss was Bill Rainey, who had been brought in as a political appointee. He was in retirement from NBC, and then had joined the National Association of Manufacturers in their public information office to handle radio, and then he came out of that job into the VOA to do public service for his country. He was a dear, sweet man, but utterly ineffectual in that role. But he passed my memo on to Barry Zorthian, and to this day I have this memo I got back with Zorthian's scrawl across the bottom, “Excellent memo. Let's discuss.” And to this day, we've never discussed it. [Laughter] Because I was talking about the number of people we needed and the requirements for program material. So I have to kid Barry about that.

Director George V. Allen's Desire for Expanded English Language Broadcasting

But that went on from October of 1955 until the summer of 1958, when the Marines went into Lebanon. At that time, George Allen, who was then the director of the agency, and was on the record in the public prints with a proposal that we have broadcasts in nothing but English. His reasoning? Because people who are subjected to a foreign language broadcast are automatically going to suspect that you are targeting it for them, you're propagandizing them, you've created a thing that is designed to twist the facts and to change the situation as far as their reception is concerned. He was a great believer in English broadcasting, but he had not, because of budget constraints, been able to expand the English broadcasting. We were doing six half-hours a day to different regions of the world at that time.

Suddenly, because of the emergency on the ground in the Middle East, he threw us on the air 24 hours a day in English. Well, with the size staff we had, we had to reorganize ourselves immediately and quickly. Three of us became shift supervisors, and we alternated every week. One week we'd be on from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The next week we'd be on from 4:00 p.m. to midnight, the next week from midnight 'til 8:00 a.m. All of us were going crazy with this sudden shift in the clock in our bodies. But this went on for weeks, and finally, Allen concluded that this ought to be kept—not to 24 hours, but heavily expanded English.

When the crisis then calmed down in the Middle East, we had a base from which to move into a new schedule, but the new schedule clearly would not allow for a one-hour-a-day program of this complex nature that we'd had before. We had to simplify very heavily in order to turn out this much material.

Panorama USA served its purpose for three years or so, almost three years, in the '50s, and then it died.

Willis Conover: The Star of “Music USA”

Q: Before we leave this area, can you recall, Cliff, who discovered Willis Conover? He'd been an announcer on a local station in Washington, but who was it who tapped him and talked him into it?

GROCE: I knew Willis Conover. I didn't know him personally, but I had been to jazz concerts here when I was an intern. We used to go out to the old Uline Arena up in northeast Washington and to other places. Of course, in those days, Washington was still heavily segregated. I'll never forget that the day I first met Willis Conover, to shake his hand, to say, “I'm Cliff Groce, and I know who you are,” was the same day that I met Dean Acheson, the Secretary of State. Our entire intern group had been welcomed by Acheson in his office on February 6, 1951. And that night, my wife and I went out to Lewis and Alex's, a club on U Street, because George Shearing was playing there with his trio. Just after 11:00 o'clock, in came Willis Conover, having finished his 10:00 to 11:00 show on WWDC, and the only available seat was on a banquette next to me, a little two-by-four table. He sat down, and I immediately recognized him and greeted him. That was the first time that I met Willis Conover, but that was before he ever showed up at the Voice of America.

From what I've heard through the years, I think it was John Wiggin who knew the guy and knew of his work. And then after he came to VOA on a weekend basis, he got it turned around so he'd be the regular host.

Q: I think it should be recorded that Willis, over the years, has never been a regular employee of the United States Information Agency.

GROCE: That's right.

Q: You might explain how that works and how it is as of today, as far as you know.

GROCE: That's right. I think he may be regretting it at this point, because he's had a lot of health problems and he's had no sick leave, and he's got no retirement. But

Willis has always wanted to maintain an independent position. He felt that by retaining his independence and maintaining a contractual relationship with the government of the United States, that this enabled him to do things, especially with foreign peoples, especially in eastern Europe, that he, as a government employee, would simply not be able to do, or certainly not be able to do gracefully. Furthermore, it would enable him to fit into the musical scene in this country without the onus of being a government employee, a bureaucrat. So he chose this path.

Now, the fact has also been that through the years the VOA and the agency have been particularly generous in the contractual arrangements with Willis. Because he had an abode in New York as well as in Washington, he was given money to travel between the two cities, an allotment for that purpose. He was able to do a number of things that an employee couldn't do. Certainly, his experiences in eastern Europe, I think, are among the most valuable things that this agency's ever had going for it.

Birth, Nature and Purpose of Special English

Q: Back to the English. It was about this time, was it not, that Special English assumed importance at the Voice?

GROCE: Special English came in 1959. The study of the possibility of something like this was going on when I was still here in '58, before I went to Munich in the spring of '59, but it hadn't yet got on the air. A number of professors of English as a Second Language, of linguistics, various professors around the United States had been consulted, most of whom had thrown up their hands and said, “This is not realistic. This is not the way to teach English.” Was this Henry Loomis' idea?

Q: I arrived at the Voice as deputy director in September 1959. At that time, it was just getting to be a very hot issue. Henry was 100% behind it, and it was one of the

enthusiasms throughout the Voice. I don't know if any one individual can take credit for it. A number of people participated.

GROCE: The person who developed it, finally, who got it onto the air was Dick Borden. Because all these professors were very discouraging in terms of what they thought would work and what they thought would not work.

Q: The difference, basically, as I recall, was that the professors thought that we planned this as a way to teach English, but we looked upon it as a means of communication.

GROCE: Exactly!

Q: So there were two different approaches.

GROCE: But it was concluded that Basic English, which is a 750-word vocabulary, was too limited, and yet we wanted something that could be simple enough, clear enough, slow enough, so that a person who was learning English in an academic context could follow the thing and ultimately improve his or her English so that they could be able to listen to the regular English broadcasts. We have a lot of evidence that this has, in fact, been the case. A lot of people have graduated to regular English.

Q: Well, it's certainly proved itself over the years, hasn't it?

GROCE: Oh, absolutely.

Q: And it's going on today.

GROCE: It's going on today.

Q: What number of words, would you say, is in the vocabulary today, do you have any idea?

GROCE: It may be up to 1,500 now. It was about 1,300 when I left.

Q: Anything else in this period, Cliff, before we turn to Munich?

The “Forum” Program

GROCE: Yes. In 1959 or maybe it was late '58, Henry Loomis, Director of VOA, or somebody conceived of a program, a series of lectures about major areas of study in the United States—medicine, law, philosophy, literature, and so on, it may have been Ted Wertime's idea to get this thing started. Henry gave him credit for it. Loomis put Forum on the air, and the guy that was brought in—it was not Wertime, but I forget the guy's name who started the series.

Q: Was it Walter Nichols?

GROCE: Walter Nichols. He knew nothing about radio, and so I held his hand and put him through the whole process, and I worked with him. The first series was about medicine in the United States. Each of these series had an outside coordinator who was an expert in the field. We got a guy from Walter Reed [Hospital] to coordinate the series on medicine. Each lecture would be on a specialization of the broad field. That program, which I never thought was a radio program—lectures on the air are really hard to take—I thought it should have been reconstituted, reformatted from the very beginning, but the written materials that grew out of those lectures were used by universities in other parts of the world with great success. In fact, the medical series I mentioned was used by the faculty of the University of the Philippines. We got word on that from USIS Manila. And there were a number of such cases. Professors of American literature would use some of our hardbound books or softbound books on American literature. That was a very interesting development we had. Special English and Forum were both out of that '59 period.

1958: Munich Radio is Changed From Direct Program Origination and Broadcasting to a Program Center

Q: Do you want to turn to Munich now?

GROCE: Fine.

Q: How did you happen to go to Munich?

GROCE: I applied for the job. [Laughter] And Barry Zorthian picked me.

Q: Explain what we had in Munich at that time.

GROCE: The Munich operation of the Voice had, since 1951 or '52, been a radio center. It was a forward outpost of the Voice of America, actually broadcasting, originating programs to be broadcast into Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union a la Radio Free Europe, which was also created about the same time by the US Government.

There was a newsroom established over there, there was a policy office, policy mechanism. But in 1958, at the time John Albert was assigned over there and at the time Jerry Donohue was assigned over there, a change occurred. I don't know whether the change was strictly for budget reasons or because of some of the problems that had developed in the political involvements of some of the staff in the Munich operation and their opposition to some of the instructions and guidance they'd been getting from Washington and, worse, in some cases, their actual subversion of such guidance. In any case, it was decided and decreed that all original broadcasting would be done from Washington. What had been a so-called radio center in Munich would become a program center in Munich, recording program materials for sending back by tape in the pouch to Washington for rebroadcast in the languages and in English.

So by the time I arrived there in the spring of 1959, we were covering international conferences, covering disarmament talks, covering international organizations headquartered in Geneva or Vienna or wherever. We would go from Munich to Berlin or to Geneva or to Paris or to London, but the center, the focal point was Munich, partly for the historical reasons of the existence of the facilities there, the office space, and the people with the expertise.

Q: What transmitters were being used at that time from Munich, do you recall? Were these German transmitters?

GROCE: These were the old SCODA transmitters which the Germans had seized from the Czechs in '38. Some of them are still broadcasting today. [Laughter]

Q: I'm afraid so. So when you arrived, what was your job?

GROCE: I was called a program officer, but I was made the senior editor, in effect. I would edit the work that other people did. I also did a lot of writing myself.

In converting it from a radio center to a program center, a number of the people who stayed on there had been connected with foreign language operations, and had done relatively little writing in the English language, certainly in broadcast terms, short sentences. So one of my chief responsibilities in the early days was to teach these people to write standard radio English.

I'll never forget one of the first scripts I got from one of the foreign language broadcasters, who had been an eminent journalist in his own right for many, many years, including in the English language. The first script of his I saw, the second or third sentence was a page long. You'd think it was a novel by Thomas Mann! I had to sit down with this gentleman and go through it very carefully, line by line, and we made a script out of it.

Q: John Albert was in charge of the Munich operation?

GROCE: John Albert was in charge of the Munich operation when I arrived. John Albert is probably the single most politically sensitive—fingertip sensitive—person I've ever known. The man had an almost uncanny ability to sense moods, to sense trends, to sense what was going to happen next. It was really a fascinating thing to watch and to try to learn from him, although I'm afraid some of that can't be learned; it's almost intuitive.

When I arrived, John came back from Geneva, where he, and Jerry Donohue and Ed Brown were covering a conference at the time. He came back just to greet me and went right back that weekend.

I was then, in effect, in charge of at least the program side of the Munich operation. Al Julia, his deputy, was in charge of running the whole shebang. But I would be on the phone to our people in Geneva every day, because they'd feed a spot in the afternoon for transmission back to Washington. On some occasions, such as this, we would be feeding Washington rather than sending it in by tape when it was obviously a topical event that had to be covered that day. This was the beginning, in effect, of what became the bureau, which is constantly feeding back to Washington.

I'll never forget one day there was a grammatical error in a spot that had been fed up from Geneva. I said, “There's a grammatical error here.”

John Albert got on at the other end and screamed at me, and said, “Damn it, we know it's a grammatical error! It had to be written that way because otherwise we would be acknowledging the legitimacy of the East German Government!” [Laughter] This was at the time of the arguments over the shape of the table—remember that discussion?

Q: Yes.

GROCE: So I backed off quickly, but I had the feeling I'd never get along with this guy, I'd never be able to work with John Albert, because he was such a tyrant, seemingly. Although I had been told by people who worked in his office in Washington before I went

over there that he was really a pussycat beneath all that bluster. And he turned out to be really one of the finest bosses I've ever had.

It was a very interesting series of events and of coverages. During that period, I learned that I could collaborate with somebody. As a reporter or writer, I had always operated strictly alone, but there I met the man that I could really collaborate with—Jerry Donohue. I'd be at the typewriter, and he'd be at my shoulder, and it was as though these two minds were funneling in together into that typewriter. It was just incredible. We really thought right together.

Q: How long did you stay in Munich, Cliff?

GROCE: Two years.

Q: Did you want to stay longer?

Return to VOA: Deputy Chief, Program Branch,English Language Division

GROCE: I fully expected to stay longer, but my mother became very ill, and we had two little children, and I was very much afraid that if I didn't get the kids back close to Grandma or get back closer to her myself, because of her condition, that it would be too late. So with John's permission, I wrote to Barry Zorthian and explained the situation. He was very understanding and said I'd certainly have a job when I got back to VOA.

Q: What was that job?

GROCE: Just as I got back, the baton was being passed from Barry Zorthian, who was going to India, to Alex Klieforth, who was coming back from Berlin, where he was director of RIAS (Radio in the Allied Section) at the time. Alex offered me one of two jobs. He was creating a new job in charge of correspondents overseas, which we were then beginning

to send out. That was the very beginning of the correspondent corps. The other was to be in the English broadcasting operation as the deputy chief of the program branch.

I decided that while I was very interested in the work of correspondents and what I might be able to bring to that based on my own experience in Europe, I chose the other job because of its centrality in programming matters, not just the news side, but the feature side, commentary side, everything else. That's where I wound up.

Q: Who was the chief at that time?

GROCE: At that time a gentleman was brought in from NBC Schenectady named Donn Chown, who is now a member of the USIA Alumni Association.

Q: Oh, yes!

GROCE: Whom I see at the luncheons.

Q: What were the major developments in that area while you were there, would you say?

Turf Battles Between Program Units

GROCE: There was a sort of turf battle after a while. When John Albert came back a year later, in '62, from Munich, and took over the Central Program Services Division, he, because of his long association and friendship with Alex Klieforth, wanted to get several of the functions that were then in the English operation transferred over to the Central Program Services. We in the English operation, of course, resisted this strongly. He did get the feature operation taken out of English and assigned to his shop. But shortly thereafter, it was put back in English, and a feature adaptations unit was set up in his shop instead, to take feature materials written for English broadcast, to be simplified and streamlined for distribution to the language services for their use. Because it is easier to simplify something that is a little more complex or written for English broadcast than to try

to take something that is written neutrally and improve it with tapes and actualities on the one hand, and simplified in the other direction. So that was what happened.

Before that, in '61, even though I was assigned to English, I was borrowed by Central Program Services, of which Len Reed was in charge, to do documentaries. I did a series on the specialized agencies of the United Nations, called “Beyond Politics.” I did a half-hour documentary on the death of Dag Hammarskjold and its meaning for the UN. I did a half-hour documentary on the desegregation of the public schools in Dallas, Texas. There were several very interesting major programs that I worked on.

New Show: The “Have You Been Told” Program Beamed to USSR Ed Murrow Spices Up First Broadcast

I was assigned the responsibility to do the great mass transmitter effort in November of 1961, shortly after the Soviets resumed atmospheric testing, called “Have You Been Told?” in which we were telling the Soviet listeners what their government had failed to tell them. That was an interesting experience. I wrote the thing very carefully. I tried to keep it as straightforward and deadpan as possible, while still painting dramatic elements. Len Reed, who was then the chief, as I mentioned, took it uptown. We were supposed to record it on Friday afternoon for broadcast Saturday afternoon to the Soviet Union. The English version would be run at 1:00 o'clock, and the Russian version would be run at 2:00 o'clock our time. So Len Reed took it up to show Ed Murrow at noon on Friday. Everybody who had anything to do with it in VOA thought it was fine. Murrow didn't like it. Murrow didn't find it dramatic enough. He said, “Juice it up some, really hit them.”

So Len Reed came back. We had to postpone the recording of the thing till the next morning, and Ed Gordon and I took typewriters into Len Reed's office. We were really under a deadline. I took my name off the thing because I didn't want credit for it. Each of us took a third of the show. Ed Gordon found an absolutely horrific headline from Al Gomhoureya in Cairo about the poisoning of the atmosphere and we're all going to die. It

was really gruesome, really way beyond the realities, but it made a sensational opening for the show. I got with the producer and we started going through sound effects, so we'd mention the names of all the sites of the tests, Novaya Zemlya, and we'd put an explosion —BOOM!—Irkutsk—BOOM! [Laughter] We almost hammed it up. It was almost a spoof, but he liked it. So we recorded the next morning at 7:00 o'clock. It ran that afternoon.

Monday, there came a message from the embassy in Moscow saying, “While the program was quite satisfactory, for a Soviet audience it would have been better to have it done in a more matter-of-fact, straightforward style.”

Q: Cliff, we ended the other side [of the tape] on a note that I want you to pursue if you want to. Or do you want to pick up a new thread?

Murrow's Two Deputies Were a Trial for VOA

GROCE: I would like to make one little observation, since we talked about Ed Murrow. Ed Murrow was always one—and still is—of my great journalistic heroes. But as far as VOA was concerned, the Murrow era, given his two deputies, was the most unfortunate period.

Q: Speaking of Don Wilson and Tom Sorensen.

GROCE: Don Wilson, as a friend of Bobby Kennedy's, and Tom Sorensen, the brother of Ted Sorensen in the White House, had a great deal of influence within the administration and within the agency, clearly. This was the only time in my entire memory of my days with the Voice of America that we received written instructions on how to play the news, “Accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative, don't mess with Mr. In-between.” It wasn't signed by Ed Murrow, it was signed by Tom Sorensen, his policy and plans deputy. It was unbelievable to see such a thing in print, especially following on your success and Henry's success in getting a Charter for the Voice of America, because it gave the lie to that Charter. I have always wondered to what extent Murrow knew about, approved the issuance of that instruction to the Voice of America. Murrow was sandbagged on many

occasions, and he was between the upper and the nether millstones all the time with these two guys.

I'll never forget one time we were doing a series of programs, which is still on the air, “Issues in the News,” which Bill McCrory had started back in '58, using outside journalists to give their own views of developments that week in the news. These were eminent people, like Bill Stringer, who was the bureau chief of the Christian Science Monitor; Pete Lisagor of the Chicago Daily News; Marquis Childs, the syndicated columnist; and Charles Cordry—really eminent journalists. Stringer was the regular moderator of the program. That's when we still had a regular moderator.

The agency had put out a guidance saying that because of current controversy with Canada about American nuclear weapons on Canadian soil, no media output would talk about American nuclear weapons on Canadian soil. But it happened to be the big controversial story of the week, and we never told these people what they could talk about. Murrow killed the program when he found out the subject, so we had to fill with some fluff or whatever in lieu of “Issues in the News” that week.

Obviously, Bill McCrory, who did the program, had to inform Bill Stringer that his program had been canceled. Stringer was livid, and he called Murrow and insisted on lunch, and he said if this were done again, he would have to cease all relationship with the program and with the Voice of America. He just wanted no part of this kind of an operation, because it was made clear that these people were giving their own views. So Murrow backed down. What we got was a new charter, in effect—it was a memorandum—but we called it the Issues Charter, because it said there would be no interference in the exercise of the journalists' freedom to say what they wanted to on any subject.

Q: I know that my successor, Art Hummel—I was safely back in the field, but Art told me later that he almost came to blows with Tom Sorensen. Whether it was over this issue or another, I don't know, but I know it was a very bitter time for Art.

GROCE: It might have been over the memo I mentioned. I don't know.

Q: This is a side of Ed Murrow that most of us don't know. We still respect the guy.

GROCE: I respect him.

Q: But it's a side of him that you prefer not to think of. What else was happening during this period, Cliff? What else stands out on the people you worked for or people who worked for you?

VOA During the Cuban Missile Crisis - 1962

GROCE: Of course, the Cuban Missile Crisis stands out very prominently. I've never worked so hard in my life as I did that week, as a lot of other people did, too, because clearly, everything had to be very carefully handled. Burnett Anderson was assigned to VOA to sit in the newsroom, from the policy and plans office, and he was obviously very uncomfortable in this censor role, which is what it amounted to. John Albert wrote a memo after that week, which is one of the strongest things I have ever read in my life, in which he compared our experience of the previous week to Goebbel's operation. John was certainly not one of these flaming news-at-any-cost people; a very reasonable man and a very positive man. I wish I had a copy today of that memo he wrote.

Q: To whom did he write it?

GROCE: I think he wrote it to the director.

Q: Of the Voice?

GROCE: The Voice.

Q: That would be Henry Loomis at that time still.

GROCE: Yes, it would have been Henry. I meant to ask Henry about that, in fact, when I interviewed him, but it slipped by. That was a very, very crucial period, of course. Henry Loomis has described the setting up of the network of 23 private radio stations and sending the AT&T people in to jigger the boards in the stations, saying they were making an adjustment. And when the White House called the presidents and owners of the stations, and put Henry on to answer their questions and he was asked, “How do we do this?” he says, “It's already done. Just flip the switch here.” [Laughter]

Q: We're talking about what year now?

GROCE: That was '62.

Q: You remained in that job until when?

GROCE: I was in one capacity or another, as an editor in the English division and the deputy chief of the program operation and the deputy chief of the division until I moved to the front office, until I moved to the program office as deputy program manager in '68, when Vestel Lott died.

Q: An old friend, Vestel. I knew him in Japan. I don't want to jump over anything, because that's quite a few years, but do you want to proceed to 1968?

VOA on Occasion of the Kennedy Assassination

GROCE: I'd like to talk about the Kennedy assassination.

Q: Please do.

GROCE: I was sitting in my office with the strowger on, listening to the line that was to carry the President's speech in Dallas, which we were going to carry live.

Q: You might explain, Cliff, what a strowger is, for the benefit of someone who doesn't know.

GROCE: A strowger is a loudspeaker system that is able to bring in material from a variety of sound sources—radio stations, television stations, the White House, the State Department, the congressional committee rooms, the radio and TV galleries on both sides of the Hill, major hotel ballrooms—any place that is likely to be the site of a major event. And it comes in and then can be punched up or dialed up by a broadcaster in any part of the organization.

Q: Thank you. Back to the Kennedy assassination.

GROCE: I was listening to these two announcers sitting there in a station in Dallas, because we were taking the feed from this station. We didn't have anybody traveling with the President at that time. They were just sitting there talking to each other casually, and then I hear one of them say, “There's word that the President's been shot.” Of course, I perked up my ears. We were on the air with Special English at that time, at 2:00 o'clock.

Well, suddenly, all hell broke loose in Dallas, and you could hear these voices, people talking, and the word came that he was on his way to the hospital. So I got Bill McCrory, who was always our number one anchor for special broadcasts, and Bob Lodge, who was working with Bill at the time in the Special Projects office, and got them into the studio. We interrupted the Special English broadcast, explained why, and came on with a special program. And sure enough, then had to reveal the fact that the President had been killed.

Then we went on the air to stay. Of course, other language broadcasts were expanded, too, but English was on the air worldwide from that time until the following Wednesday after Johnson's speech to the Congress on Capitol Hill, straight through, worldwide, throughout the whole period. We covered everything that was happening. We deployed people all over this town. The funeral itself, the parade, cortege was covered all the way

out to Arlington. Of course, we were all emotionally involved ourselves, because whatever our politics, this was the President, and this was a very traumatic period in our history. Yet everybody had to keep doing his professional best, and it was really very hard for a lot of people a lot of the time. I was very proud of our performance in that period. In fact, people depended on us for the word. We know that BBC didn't announce the death of John Kennedy until they heard it on the Voice of America, because they could confirm it that way.

Q: Let me add a footnote here that supports all that. The day that Kennedy was assassinated, I was in Korat, in northeast Thailand, visiting our post there. I had always carried a short-wave radio with me, and when I awakened in a Chinese hotel at 7:00 a.m., I tuned in first thing to VOA English, and there I learned about the assassination. The coverage was superb, and you just couldn't have asked for more professionalism than the Voice gave us then.

On the way back to Bangkok, driving back, every Thai Government office had the flag at half-staff, and I inquired along the way how they heard about it. “VOA.” “VOA.” “VOA.” Everyplace we'd go!

GROCE: Glad to hear it.

Q: Either in English or Thai. It was a great tribute to the VOA, the coverage.

Do you want to jump into '68 with your new duties?

GROCE: Fine.

Q: You were then assigned as deputy to Barry Zorthian?

GROCE: No, no. Barry had been long gone.

Q: Barry had long gone to India.

1968: Groce Becomes VOA Deputy Program Manager

GROCE: This was Francis Ronalds by this time. He came in during the Carter Administration. He had been a high official of Radio Liberty in Munich.

Q: So your title at that time was?

GROCE: Deputy Program Manager.

Q: You succeeded who in that?

GROCE: Vestel Lott.

Q: When Vestel died?

GROCE: I was brought in temporarily while he was still alive, but hospitalized and in terrible pain and terrible-looking.

Q: Under Ronalds, did you have a special responsibility?

GROCE: From that time until I left the job, the Program Manager exercised main responsibility for central output—newsroom, News and Current Affairs. I was basically responsible for the language service broadcasts and English. Obviously, it was not cut-and-dried, because he got involved a lot with other programs, too, but one of my responsibilities was to set up, organize, and run the program reviews of all the language services. I took on the responsibilities for the budget. I took on a lot of the personnel responsibilities. I was sort of the administrative manager along with the program.

Special “Characters” in VOA

Q: In your responsibility with respect to the language services, we don't want to overlook the wonderful collection of talent that we had at the Voice in people ranging from Barmine,

the former Russian general, to people who had had all sorts of experiences in eastern Europe and other parts of the world. Do any of these people stand out in your memory for exceptional service or eccentricity or anything else?

GROCE: Certainly Barmine, you mentioned. One of my favorite stories about Barmine—he would sit in the morning meeting, the 9:30 meeting, with The New York Times up in front of his face, and the leadership of the Voice across the raised platform, just ignoring them until they said something that he didn't agree with, and he'd put the paper down and say, “Nonsense!” or “Ridiculous!” [Laughter]

Q: We should note that Barmine was head of the Russian service and had been a general in the Soviet Army, a remarkable man who died just within the last month or so.

Special Monitoring of VOA Language Services

GROCE: There were a number of colorful characters in various language services. The language services, rightly or wrongly, fortunately or unfortunately, were never given the chance to shine that they should have had, in my opinion. There was such fear of people going off on their own to make their own political points, that regulations were very strict most of the time that I was there. The news was provided by the newsroom, and you had to use these things in this order or get special permission for exceptions. You had to carry the commentary of the day or the analysis of the day or the editorial of the day, whatever it was called at any given time. A lot less leeway was given to them in terms of creating their own programs, and this is what I tried to fight the whole time I was in there. I've always contended that you can't put the same program on to the Thais and the Poles.

Q: Do you recall any instance in which a language service tried to make political points in violation of, say, overall US policy? Was there something that happened that caused these restrictions to be put in place?

GROCE: If there was, I can't recall it. I don't know about it myself. I think it was just a fear that it might happen, because people did assert themselves at meetings, you know.

Q: We did have, at that time, the monitoring by Voice personnel of the languages, which is long gone now, I guess. Was it set up for that? Was that one of the reasons it was set up?

GROCE: Of course, it had been set up during the war for that reason, and it hung on for many, many years, quite beyond its useful life, I thought, because it didn't cover nearly all the languages. There were just two or three people left there in the closing days of the monitoring service. I think it was a useful thing for a wartime period and maybe during the depths of the Cold War in the late Forties, early '50s. But certainly long before the head of it, Bob Mayer, finally retired, it had outlived its usefulness. You hire the right people to do the job and then you depend on them. Of course, you check them in program reviews and you check them with some outside consultants.

Q: But you think, as of the last you knew, the restrictions on the language services work were too severe?

GROCE: Yes. There have been a number of cases in which, because of the sheer creativity and liveliness and radio skills of some of the broadcasters, they've done programs of a feature nature that were really superb. I remember back in '76, the Spanish branch did a half-hour program on the Bicentennial, and it was written by Luis Daniel Uncal and produced by Ramon Medina, the man who's now wound up having to be retired because of his gold dealing in Peru, remember reading about it?

Q: Oh, yes.

GROCE: But he's a fine producer. It was such an excellent program that the division wanted to nominate it for the Director's Creativity Award, and the then deputy director of VOA didn't want to do this because of the problems we had had with Medina through the years—he was such a malcontent. But I took the position, “For heaven's sake, from a

managerial point of view, it's to our advantage to give him an award in the field in which he really is good so he cannot say that we're prejudiced against him on all counts." So the guy relented, and he got the award—the two of them got the award. Within three months, we had another run-in with him, and we were able to say, "You see, we keep these categories quite separate."

Problems of Mixing Foreign Service and Civil Service Personnel in VOA Jobs

Q: You mentioned, Cliff, that one of your duties was personnel. At least a basic question must have troubled you from time to time, and that was the mix of Foreign Service and Civil Service persons in the Voice. Have you, after all these years, reached any basic conclusion as to how that should be, or has it worked out well, or has it been a disaster?

GROCE: It's been a mixture. Some of the finest people who've ever worked at the Voice of America, yourself included, were Foreign Service officers. Some of the most disastrous people we've ever had at the Voice of America were Foreign Service people, who probably did a very good job in field posts, but who never understood or, in some cases, wanted to understand the differences between what they do out there and what they had to do in the Washington headquarters of VOA.

Of course, this gets us into a bigger can of worms, if you want to get into that.

Q: I think it's fundamental.

GROCE: Back in '75, you will recall, the Stanton Commission came out with a report recommending the reorganization of the information and cultural functions of this government. They called for the policy support operations to be put back in the Department of State from USIA, the cultural operations to be set up along the lines of the British Council, and VOA to be an independent element. Henry Loomis still disagrees strongly with that recommendation. But most of us in leadership positions in the VOA,

careerists in VOA, did approve of that, certainly the separating out of VOA, although we recognized the dangers, too.

I helped draft the so-called declaration of independence that we did shortly after the Charter was made into law, in which we wanted to get on the record with anybody that would look and listen, the feelings of the career staff of VOA about the institution. But one of the points I insisted on including in that document was the desirability of retaining access to the corps of Foreign Service people, but to be brought in on VOA's terms, rather than the Agency's terms, because in so many instances in the past, it has been strictly at the convenience of the Agency personnel office because somebody was scheduled for a Washington assignment.

I remember vividly one case—I shall not repeat the name—but an officer was transferred back to Washington because his post had to be closed in an emergency situation. He had no experience in the particular language or particular country, but the Agency decided in its wisdom that he was going to be the head of this major—I mean, very major—service of the Voice of America, as a reward for what he had been through in this emergency situation in the country concerned.

The division chief and I went to the office of the then deputy director of the Agency's, and joining him there was the area director for the area concerned and the head of Foreign Service personnel. The division chief and I laid out our arguments against this person's being assigned to this job, and the deputy director of the Agency agreed that they would think it over. Of course, we knew when we walked out of the room that the decision had been made before we walked into the room. But at least we were able to get our position on the table.

But the next day, I got a call from the deputy director himself, saying, “Having thought over your very logical arguments, we've still concluded that the guy's going to be sent there.” God, he was an absolute disaster in the job! He came in with a chip on his shoulder, he

came in lording it over the staff, many of whom had been there for many, many years and were really crackerjack people, and it was just an awful period for the three years he was there. Now, this is an extreme case, but this is the kind of thing that has happened all too frequently.

In many cases, a Foreign Service officer is putting in his time. He can hardly wait to get his next field assignment, so he sits there and does nothing. But I was having to write their performance ratings, and I wasn't going to screw up their careers, so I lied in many of the performance ratings. And yet you say a man's excellent—I never gave anybody below excellent—and they'd still come back to you and say, “Look, this is less than Outstanding! I'll be killed!” [Laughter]

So I think that the input of the Foreign Service is vital to an organization that is broadcasting to foreign audiences, yes, I certainly do. But I think that a way has got to be found to minimize the number of square pegs in round holes.

Q: It's been a basic issue for a long time and still is, I assume, but I'm glad you discussed it, because for those who might read this in years to come, don't think that you discovered this problem, because it's been around ever since I can remember.

Did you enjoy that job? You had it for how long?

GROCE: Thirteen years! [Laughter] So Charlie Wick was right. I was due out of that job, I guess.

Q: And during that time, you served under how many directors of VOA?

GROCE: Let's see. When I moved in there, it was just after John Charles Daly had quit, so Dick Cushing was acting director. Dick was acting until September of '69, when Ken Giddens came. Giddens was director until '77.

Q: Loomis was before this, then.

GROCE: Yes. Loomis was Deputy Director of the Agency when I moved into the job. No, Loomis was still outside in '68, when I moved in there on an acting basis, temporary, because Vestel was still alive. But then Loomis came in in January of '69, and in the summer of '69, I was made officially the deputy.

So Giddens was there until '77. Then Peter Straus was brought in by Jimmy Carter, a very interesting man. Then he left and Mary Bitterman came in. So that was it. And Conkling was the last one. Conkling came in in June of '81, and I left in November of '81.

Effect on VOA of Policy Changes Made by Changing Personnelat Top of USIA and VOA

Q: I ask that not only for the record, but to see whether you can trace the changes, any major policy changes that were introduced by any of these persons or any general change in the basic relations with what we then called "uptown."

GROCE: Yes, very definitely. The growth and development of the correspondent corps, the overseas correspondents, really flowered in the Giddens years, partly because of developments overseas that really had to be covered by an institution like our own, and partly because of the sheer importance of developing this kind of expertise. But Circular Airgram 800 that went out from Shakespeare to the field in the early '70s, was a compromise between those of us who wanted the correspondents to have the same kind of independence to operate that the commercial guys had on the news side, purely the news side, and those people who think that the news is nothing but a diplomatic note in another guise. But the crucial upshot of that Circular Airgram was that the ambassador is the final authority, has the final responsibility for anything that a VOA correspondent does. That correspondent could file the story even over the opposition of the ambassador or the PAO acting for the ambassador, but the decision would then be made in Washington, taking into account the fact that it was over the objection of the embassy.

This is the way it was when Peter Straus came in, and there had been a number of very unfortunate situations under that system. Peter Straus, in the minds of a lot of us at the time—because of remarks he made about the cost of the correspondents corps, the fact that we had all this news through other sources—he seemed to question the need for, the validity of, the legitimacy of a correspondent corps for VOA. So a lot of us felt, rightly or wrongly, when he decided to set up a study group to study the whole VOA correspondent mechanism and operation, he was using this as a means of eliminating the correspondent corps. He thought that any outsider would come to the conclusion that it wasn't necessary. Now, we may have been absolutely wrong. This may have been utterly unfair. He may have been just simply seeking information, which is what happened.

He hired Chalmers Roberts, the retired diplomatic correspondent with the Washington Post, as the chairman. He got Pauline Frederick, who was with National Public Radio at the time. Who else? I don't recall. It was called the Roberts group. They came to the conclusion that the VOA did indeed need a correspondent corps, that it was being well served by the correspondent corps, that that corps should have greater independence from political people. And to achieve this, I think they went too far in the separation itself, but the correspondents would not carry official or diplomatic passports, only regular passports; they would not have access to government commissaries or PXs overseas; they would rent their own office space, their own apartments, operate totally independently. That's what I think is going too far. But it has made an enormous difference in the way they're able to operate.

Q: How much of that report was accepted?

GROCE: The whole thing.

Q: It was? The whole report? And that's the policy today?

GROCE: Yes, sir.

Q: All of those things you mentioned?

GROCE: All of those things.

Q: I didn't know that.

GROCE: Yes, sir. I remember when Bob Chancellor in Johannesburg was elected by his peers in the foreign press corps there as the president of the Foreign Press Association in Johannesburg. People like this had always been respected for what they did. Like Philomena Jurey at the White House, she's highly respected by her colleagues, but she could never ask a question, and I think, as long as the VOA's in the government, she shouldn't be able to ask a question. But there were a number of other limitations on her relationship with the press office. And of course, it's only in very recent years that we got the credentials on the Hill.

Q: But now looking back on it today, February 8, 1988, this has been, overall, a plus or a minus, in your opinion, especially with respect to correspondents overseas?

GROCE: A great plus.

Q: And the fact that they don't have access to government housing or the PX or all the things that go with it, you've been able to attract good people to this?

GROCE: Oh, yes. The problem has been with people with kids, mainly because of costs. It costs the VOA a lot more money to support a correspondent who's having to get his own apartment and pay for all the things that go to make up family support.

Q: It doesn't go so far as to require the correspondent to pay his own transportation?

GROCE: Oh, no. He still works for the Voice of America.

Q: He's still working for the Voice.

GROCE: Oh, sure.

Q: But he has no responsibility to the PAO or the ambassador.

GROCE: No.

Q: Are there complaints from State about these arrangements?

GROCE: You'll always get complaints from the field about individual items. In fact, this is one of the things that I'm sure led to my departure from VOA under the circumstances that prevailed. In the months preceding my departure, after the arrival of Conkling in 1981, I can't remember the specifics now, there were several cases of complaints from the field about particular correspondent reports. These people, being as new as they were, without the background and all the struggles we'd been through to achieve this independence, you know, when you get a rocket from an ambassador, people are impressed, understandably. They should be. But there was such a little flurry of them there in this short period that these people began to think, “Something's wrong with these guys. What are they trying to do? Are they trying to stick it to us because we're the new boys?”

I'm surmising a lot of this, Jack. Don't hold me to it. But this was certainly the impression one got.

So then this is why, I'm sure, Mr. Wick is reported to have said he intended to be the editor-in-chief of the Voice of America. He wanted to take over that building for the Agency, and his office would then be the former fifth floor office of the Secretary of Health and Human Services. But it didn't work out that way. They got the building across the street. At least he got close.

But I think the mind set that was created by this flurry of complaints—then, of course, you had the hiring of Nikolaides and the Nikolaides memo that got to the Post and so on.

Q: You might explain who he was and what that was.

GROCE: I was gone by then.

Q: Identify him, if you will, please.

GROCE: Phil Nikolaides, Phillip Nikolaides, I don't know what he did before. He was a writer for—it's unfair for me to describe what he was before he joined the Voice of America. Anyway, he had very firm ideas about what the Voice should be doing as propagandists. He's the one who talked about “the sizzle, not the steak.” He thought you had to really make an impression with what you did on the air. He was very strongly anti-Communist, and he thought the way to talk to the world from the United States about Communism was in a slanging fashion. When his memo was made public, his memo to Conkling, it was so egregious in its description of how we ought to be doing things that he had to be let go. It was just too uncomfortable politically for the powers that were to try to maintain. He was brought in as the head of policy, but he also wrote editorials.

That's another interesting subject, the history of editorials.

Q: Yes.

GROCE: Through the years, the supplemental material to go beyond the news, talk about subjects in the news, have been in a variety of forms and guises. Even as far back as wartime, during the war years, in New York you had expressions of policy on the air. They were called commentaries in those days because it was a specific comment on a given issue. Then we went through a period in the '50s and '60s in which you didn't do commentaries; you did analyses. You analyzed the news. We had both at times. If you had a really important policy point you wanted to make, then you put it in a commentary. Otherwise, you talked about things.

Wasn't it in Henry's period when we talked about food for thought, that you put things on the air to have the audience think about them and conclude that they would come down on your side eventually, or at least closer to it? So this was what the analyses were supposed to provide—food for thought. It never came to a policy point, pushing a particular line; it was just an analysis.

When Peter Straus came, I remember he said that he had to be able to go to his friends on the Hill and say, “The American taxpayer is getting nine minutes a week of the taxpayer's money's worth.” Of course, those of us at the Voice thought they were getting a lot more than nine minutes a week of their money's worth! [Laughter] But he wanted to have something official, so that's when we, in effect, dropped the analyses and put on editorials. We opened every one with a reference to the official position of the United States on Problem X, Issue Y, and signed it off the same way.

Well, that went on throughout that period, but when the current team came in, they re-created the editorials, for some reason. Maybe something happened in the meantime, but they wanted it tougher. They wanted it more affirmative. So at the same time, some of them would be very strongly propagandistic, and others would be on the Statue of Liberty, on Christmas, on things that had nothing to do with US policy, and yet everyone wound up with this introduction about US policy.

So this is an area of broadcasting from the United States to the world that, to my mind, has never been satisfactorily resolved. Although when you had people like Ronald J. Dunlavey and Harold Courlander writing commentary and analyses, these are very fine people, they're very good writers, they're very good thinkers, they certainly knew policy backwards and forwards, and they did a good job whatever they turned out.

Q: Cliff, picking up from where we were, I think you are prepared to get into the events of 1981, is that correct? Would you like to begin there, or would you like to review more of a previous period?

Misunderstandings Leading to Groce's Departure from VOA

GROCE: 1981 is okay. When Mr. Wick became the director in March or April or so, Ken Giddens, of course, was a great propagandist for the VOA, within the government and outside the government. He made some speeches at Rotary Clubs and various places about the importance of the Voice and its need for money and facilities and people. He got a lot of information for me that he'd been familiar with before to provide to Mr. Wick for his briefings and to see to the transmitter needs and so on.

When Jim Conkling came in as director of VOA, a lot of people wondered why he was picked, because he didn't seem to know very much about international affairs.

Q: What can you tell us about his background?

GROCE: He had been the president of Columbia Records. He was either the vice president of Columbia Records and the president of Capitol Records, or vice versa, I'm not sure which. I knew at the time, but I don't remember now. He had been, also, a member of some kind of group that helped manage or oversee the broadcast operations of the Mormon Church. His wife had been a member of the King Sisters, the singing group. In fact, when she came to town before he did, I took her on a tour of the place. I gave her a briefing. Then he came in, a peach of a man, a very sweet man, a very nice man. But he never seemed to get a feel for the organization.

When people would come in from the outside to talk about some relationship between the Voice and something in China, he seemed much more open with the outsiders than he did with us insiders. I don't know whether he didn't trust us or felt we didn't trust him or what, but at the time that I was there, he never seemed to come to grips with the job quite yet.

I said a while ago that we had a flurry of complaints in from the field about things that we carried, correspondent reports, at least one of which we should never have carried,

in my opinion. But I guess it was against this background that he felt so sensitive to any developments that might look politically dangerous.

The incident that I think led to my departure from the institution was a call that I had. Every morning Conkling would go up for the director's meeting, which was at 9:15, and he'd call me beforehand to see what he might need to bring up there so he wouldn't get sandbagged or something.

Q: What was your position at that time, once again?

GROCE: At that time, I was acting program manager. So one morning he called and said, “I want the names of the people who put the Soviet spokesman on the air last night.” Of course, I knew nothing about this.

As soon as he said that, the names of the people who put it on the air, I thought, “Oh-oh, here we go.” So I said, “Well, Jim, I don't know whether you realize that you're really opening a can of worms with this kind of request.”

And obviously he was sitting in Mr. Wick's office. He said, “I want those names!” Very formal.

I said, “Okay, Jim, I'll get them for you, but I want to have nothing to do with this. I'll get you the names, but I don't want to know the names.” I checked into the situation immediately and found out what had been carried the night before. I don't know whether some reaction had come from overseas or whether somebody had heard it on the air here, on the strowger or whatever, but the English program staff had picked up a quote from a Soviet embassy spokesman. It had something to do with some negotiation between the United States and the Soviet Union, and then it was followed by the President giving the American position. So what we had done was to set up, in effect, a straw man, and let the President knock it down, which is a valid technique. Then at another point, they had used

a quote from Arbatov, just a short one, again followed by the President. But the fact that we'd carried any Soviet at all apparently is what upset whomever.

So I went to the acting chief of English, because Hal Banks was overseas, and his deputy Woody Demitz was there. I said, “I want the names of the editors who put the Soviets on the air last night. Put them in an envelope and give them to me. I don't want to know who they are.” So he did.

But every morning, Conkling spent the whole morning uptown, and he would come in after lunch to VOA—practically every morning, not every morning. So this day he came in about 2:00 o'clock. I saw him go by my door. I quickly followed him down the hall to his office, and I handed him the envelope. I said, “Here are the names.” But I said, “I don't think you realize, Jim, what you're getting into, because all kinds of suspicions are aroused.” He had also asked for all the English output for the 24 hours including that thing. I said, “Do you realize what you're asking for?” He wanted it by 5:00 o'clock. I said, “It's impossible to get it done by 5:00 o'clock.”

“I want it by 5:00 o'clock!” Well, of course, you can't hide a thing like this. Everybody in the division knows that you're having to transcribe all of the output.

So again, when he came in that afternoon, I said, “They're working on the transcribing and I have the names, but I don't think you realize the implications of this. There's no way to keep this quiet, and word is already all over the house that people are being suspected of things.”

And he said to me, “You really feel that strongly about the names?”

I said, “Yes, I do.”

He said, “Well, forget it.” He gave me back the envelope and just dismissed it like that.

Q: He still wanted the 24-hour output, though?

GROCE: Yes. We got most of it by 5:00 o'clock; the rest of it went into the evening. But he was so casual about this dismissal, and I just tore it up and threw it away, and that was the last I heard of it.

Then the newsroom put out a monthly or quarterly or whatever in-house publication called Newsroom News, and Mark Willen was editing the thing. He was one of the senior editors. He did an interview with Jim Conkling about the correspondent reports and reactions to them and about this little hassle over the names and the output. In the course of the interview, Conkling says to him, “Why, Cliff Groce even suggested that this was a new McCarthyism.”

Q: Had you mentioned that word to him?

GROCE: No. I had mentioned in another memo quite separate from this a reference to the early '50s. Apparently he put two and two together and came up with five or six. But he just blurted this out, apparently. I've heard since that Willen went back to him before he printed this thing and said, “Are you sure you want to say all these things in a publication?” And he said, “Absolutely.”

So then as soon as this got out—I mean, half the people in the newsroom are married to people who are in commercial journalism! I had a call within hours from Ferguson of the Baltimore Sun, because my name was in this thing—”McCarthyism.” I was on the phone. I couldn't just refer him to the Public Information Office. He had a quote there. This is direct. The Director of the Voice of America has said this; I can't deny he said it. So I tried to explain to him that the reference to McCarthy was in a completely different context and the director had mixed it up. He said, “But he said it.”

I said, “You're right. He said it, and I can't believe it. I'm just trying to get you to understand it's not quite that way.”

So he wrote, I thought, a reasonable piece that was in the Sun the next morning. But again, we tried not to let Conkling get sandbagged, trapped, so we clipped the thing and had it on his desk and called uptown to be sure he knew about it before he went into the meeting with the director. Bill Haratunian read it to him over the phone, as I recall.

Then, of course, The New York Times picked it up, talked about a confrontation between Conkling and me, in which Conkling backed down. There was no confrontation at all, and certainly no backing down. But once one of these stories takes hold, it takes on a life of its own.

I think from that time on, this was the image that Charlie Wick had of me, because then came the transfer to television. I was at the Christmas party in John Hughes' office, who was the director of the Programs Bureau at the time, about the 21st of December, and I'm standing, talking to Jack Crockett in the middle of the room, people all around, and in comes Mr. Wick.

Q: This was at the Voice?

GROCE: No, this was up in the Bureau of Programs, in John Hughes' office. I was already in the Television and Film Service by this time.

Q: How did you learn that you were going to Television?

GROCE: I was called in my Jim Conkling at a quarter to 4:00 in the afternoon and handed a letter from Charlie Wick.

Q: Addressed to you?

GROCE: Addressed to me, transferring me to be deputy director of the Television and Film Service of USIA.

Q: Any reason given?

GROCE: Just that it was hoped that I would “enjoy this challenging new assignment” or something like that, because television was the wave of the future.

Q: No criticism of your performance or behavior in any way.

GROCE: No. See, I was a Senior Executive Service member, and in the Senior Executive Service, they have to give you a job for which you are, on paper, qualified. When I read this, I was just absolutely shattered, because the Voice was my life. It's the only place I'd ever wanted to work in the United States Government.

Q: So back to the Christmas party, then. Wick came in.

GROCE: Wick came in, and he was shaking hands with people all around the room. He came up to Jack and me, and he put his hand on my shoulder and he shook my hand, and he said, “And I'm going to prove to you that this is not the beginning of a new McCarthy period.”

I said, “Mr. Wick, I never said that. I resent the reports having me say that, and I refer you to Jim Conkling for confirmation.”

And he went on. I said to Jack Crockett, “Well, you see where I stand.”

He said, “A lot of people stand behind you.”

Q: Did the subject of McCarthyism come up again?

GROCE: No, not that I ever saw.

Q: Who replaced you at the Voice?

GROCE: Frank Scott.

Q: Had he been in the wings or on the payroll?

GROCE: No.

Q: Do you think they had arranged in advance for him to come in and were trying to make room for him?

GROCE: No. Conkling told me, when he was giving me this letter, that only a handful of people would be affected. Because I had told him, “I understand that a number of people are going to be let go or transferred.”

And he said, “Only a handful.”

I said, “Well, that's at least five, isn't it?”

But sure enough, Haratunian was already gone.

Q: Had Bill gone?

GROCE: Bill had gone.

Q: Retired or what?

GROCE: He was transferred uptown to the East Asia Bureau, I think. But then he did retire shortly after that. Bernie Kamenske, of course, went with Cable News Network; Alan Heil was moved into a different job out of News and Current Affairs; Bill Read was moved out, he went up to the Agency's Telecommunications office; Hal Banks was transferred to New

York; Allan Baker retired, the head of the Near East and South Asia Division for many years.

Q: You attribute much, if not all of this, Cliff, to the incident you reported earlier?

GROCE: I think the incident I reported earlier was just the trigger, really, of a climactic moment. I think it was going to happen in any case.

Q: So that suggests that there had been some surveillance, perhaps, of individuals and their performance, their attitudes and so forth?

GROCE: No, I think they were simply determined to clean house, to have their own people. The assumption seemed to be that anybody who had been there for any length of time would not be adjustable, adaptable, to the new way of doing things.

Q: If that were the case, why did they make you number two at television? That wasn't a throw-away job.

GROCE: Heavens, it was a wonderful job, and I think the happiest year I spent in the Agency was that 14 months there!

Q: How do you square that with the idea of shaking up the Voice?

GROCE: Because it got me out of the Voice.

Q: Yes, but if you were of malicious intent, you could have carried on at Television.

GROCE: I don't think there was suspicion of malicious intent.

Q: But they wanted you out of the Voice.

GROCE: Just as they wanted Kamenske. Heil is still at the Voice. In fact, he's in my old job. They've reorganized again so that it's now the way it was. But they got rid of a number of us.

Q: Looking back on that experience, Cliff, do you find more than traces of McCarthyism?

GROCE: I think it's quite different. It's not looking for Communists. I mean, those of us who had been transferred or moved about or whatever, forced to retire, I don't think any of us have been suspected of being a Communist sympathizer or a sucker for the Communist line or anything of that sort. I think it's just that these people wanted to have people around them with whom they could be comfortable, with whom they felt an ideological . . .

Q: Possibly more sympathetic to the Reagan cause?

GROCE: Sure.

Q: You went to TV in what year?

GROCE: 1981.

Q: Who was your boss there?

GROCE: That was interesting, too, because my boss then was the deputy director of television, but he was acting director, because the director had been transferred overseas. Jim Perrin was the acting director when I went, who is now deputy PAO in Paris. But Perrin did a very nice thing, the night that I was given my walking papers and was told I was transferred to Television, that Sam Courtney and Terry Catherman were coming in.

Q: In what capacities were they coming in?

GROCE: Terry as deputy director, and Sam as deputy for programs. The title was changed; he was second deputy. They arrived to be introduced the day I was given the paper.

Q: You say you had a happy year at television.

Acting Director of TV Service

GROCE: But then within two months, Jim Perrin was transferred to the field, so I was, after no preparation whatsoever, Acting Director of Television and Film for months! I've got to say that was a very productive period. We turned out some very fine stuff. I should say they turned out some very fine stuff. Whatever you think of the program value or significance of “Let Poland Be Poland,” it was a major accomplishment in purely technical production terms. I think Jock Shirley did an absolutely superb managerial job in pulling all those strings together.

Q: What was his job at the time?

GROCE: He was the counselor of the Agency. Of course, he had this special relationship with things Polish because of his service there. He really honchoed that thing to a T. He was the focal figure for the Hollywood connections and the New York connections and the State Department connections, FCC connections. He really did a superb job. I got a nice letter from Charlie Wick from Rome, thanking me for all of our hard work getting it on the air.

I never felt really in charge at television, because I wasn't, in the first place, prepared for it. In the second place, I was just waiting until a new director came in, which didn't happen until the fall.

Q: Who was that?

GROCE: Al Snyder, who is still the director.

Q: He was an outsider or a career man?

GROCE: An outsider. He was the television coordinator for the Nixon White House.

Q: Do you want to discuss more about your TV period there, or do you want to go on to the next one?

GROCE: That's probably fine.

Q: So you were in TV, Cliff, from approximately when to when?

GROCE: From November 30, 1981 to February 21, 1983.

From TV to Press Services

Q: Then what happened? Did you get another letter?

GROCE: Yes, but I got a little warning before. Let's just say I got a less-than-fully-satisfactory performance rating as a result, apparently, of a memo I wrote to the director, which to this day I've never had explained, but I was told the director was outraged by my memo.

Q: Can you tell us the subject of the memo?

GROCE: It had to do with the TV Satellite File, a project that we were working on, which was a very special favorite of the director's. We hadn't asked for money. First we had asked just for permission to proceed to do a pilot program, and we were going to use money from our own budget for this purpose. The director had come back and said, “No, don't spend that money. It's got to be cheaper than that.” Of course, all these memos went up and down through John Hughes.

Q: Whose position at that time was?

GROCE: First, he was the head of Programs when the project first started, then he moved over to Broadcasting and was head of Broadcasting, and Television was moved under him by the director, because he wanted John Hughes' supervision.

So we went through several memos back and forth. After this succession of memoranda up to the director's office and back, we were finally asked one day by the counselor's office, Jock Shirley's office, to prepare a memo for the director giving the status of this project.

I was uptown at a meeting, and when I got back, a memo had been drafted by my acting deputy, Jack DeViney, an old hand in Television, setting forth the status of the thing. I read the thing and said, “Jack, this is too strong. We've got to modify this. We've got to moderate it. It's got to be gentler. Where you say 'There must have been a misunderstanding,' I'd say, 'The impression may have been created.' Let's put the onus on us and not on the director for the misunderstanding.” This kind of thing. So we softened it considerably.

I hand-carried it over to Broadcasting, told them it had to be in Jock Shirley's office before 1:00 o'clock, and they assured me it would be.

About 3:30 that afternoon, we got a call from uptown—”Where's that memo?”

I said, “My God, it was in the hands of the people that were supposed to deliver it before 1:00 o'clock.” It turns out that Frank Scott, who was the acting director at the time, had just tossed it aside and gone to lunch, and he didn't sign it until he got back. They finally found it in the routine mail, and they rescued it and it went up.

We were called back by Jock's office and told, “It's just right. Perfect.” So we were relieved to hear that.

Then the next morning, I was talking to Bob Earle, the director's assistant, about another matter, and he just said, very calmly and casually, “Oh, by the way, Cliff, the director received your memo and he's put the project on hold.” Well, as soon as I heard that, I knew he must be unhappy. He wouldn't just hold the project otherwise.

Then Terry Catherman called me a day or so later for a meeting at the National Gallery for lunch. He was then the acting director of broadcasting, because John Hughes had just transferred to the State Department as the spokesman, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. So Terry said to me, “The director was outraged by your memo.”

And I said, “Why? How?”

“I don't know, but he was outraged.”

I had asked Bob Earle, “Can you tell me why he has put it on hold?”

He said, “I'm sending you a memo.” Well, the memo turned out the next day to be a buck slip with nothing but, “The director has put it on hold.” So to this day, I have not received an explanation of why the director was outraged by that memo.

But in any case, I stayed on, kept doing my job, and Snyder came aboard in September. I went back to being deputy. Then I got the less-than-fully-satisfactory performance rating. Then I was summoned by Jim Hackett, who was then the Associate Director for Management for the Agency, to a discussion of my performance rating. In the course of our conversation, I pointed out to him that I had not even met the new director of broadcasting, who was supposed to be my boss. So he said, “Well, we'll have to do something about that.”

So the next day, I had a call that I was going to meet with Ken Tomlinson, the new director of Broadcasting, and Bill Carroll, the head of personnel for VOA, for Broadcasting, and Al Snyder, in Tomlinson's office. So we had quite a session, at the end of which

Tomlinson told me I was staying as deputy director. They were going to give me a new set of requirements, and six months from now, we'd look back and see this period as an aberration. Well, I was dumbfounded, because I thought for sure I was going to be canned at that meeting.

Two weeks later, Hackett calls me and says, “A letter is on the way transferring you from the Television Service to the Press and Publications Service.”

I said, “This is very ironic, Jim, coming on the heels of what I was just told at the meeting with the director of Broadcasting and the director of Television and the director of Personnel.”

He said, “The director has decided otherwise.” And that was it. So then I went to Press and Publications.

Q: In what capacity?

GROCE: Assistant director. Jim McGinley did not want a deputy, but they re-created the old deputy job as assistant director, number two in Press and Publications. Within a month or two, I was functioning as a full deputy for Jim. Jim had just abolished that job. But when I was forced down his throat, he was very, very gentlemanly and we got along beautifully. I had three very good bosses at Press and Publications—Jim, first, and then Cliff Southard, and then Mike Pistor, three very fine people.

Q: Did you have special responsibilities?

GROCE: Yes. The job was created for me to be in charge of, ironically, the computerized text editing operation. I knew nothing about computers. [Laughter] But I learned fast.

Q: That lasted how long, Cliff?

GROCE: Until June 30, 1986, when I retired.

Q: Any highlights of events during that period at IPS that you'd like to report? Any special problems with the front office?

GROCE: My proudest achievement during that period, since I knew nothing about computers—as I said, this was made my baby—was to establish this massive computerized text editing process system in the new building, and when we moved down from 1776 to 301 4th Street, we didn't miss a beat. We didn't miss a Wireless File.

Q: Did you have any further words with or from Mr. Wick during this period?

GROCE: Never.

Q: You said you had three good bosses there. Is this to be interpreted as being another happy assignment?

GROCE: Oh, very. Oh, yes. In fact, realistically speaking, Jack, looking back, I think I got out of VOA just in time. I think I got out of Television just in time. [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter] Not many people can say that.

GROCE: For the wrong reasons, I have Charlie Wick to thank, and certainly for a much broadened view of the Agency and meeting an awful lot of wonderful people.

Q: This is a difficult question but, I think, possibly fair. If you were to be able to redo your career with USIA, would you make any changes in your assignments?

GROCE: No, not a one.

Q: Do you recommend the Agency to bright young people?

GROCE: Absolutely.

Q: Do you feel that there has been, overall, a contribution by the Agency to global objectives?

GROCE: Oh, of course I do! I'm convinced of it.

Q: And you feel that we should remain a separate Agency? You don't favor the Roberts Report or Stanton Report?

Discussion of Whether VOA Should be Independent

GROCE: I favor the Stanton Report. Yes, I do.

Q: State again what the main points were of that report.

GROCE: As I recall it—and I haven't read it in a long time—but the proposal was—and Barbara White was a defender of the thing, too. She wrote a very nice piece in the USIA World, justifying it. But the Stanton Commission divided the functions of the Agency and CU, as it was then, in the Department of State, into three categories, three basic functional areas. One was cultural and educational as in CU; one was information in support of policy, which would mean those things like the Wireless File and magazines, other direct support media activities, move those into something like the old IIA was in the Department of State; and establish VOA as an independent entity.

Q: There would be no USIA.

GROCE: There would be no USIA left. Now, I have very mixed feelings about that aspect of it. I think USIA, in many ways, as a separate agency, as an independent agency, has been able to do a lot of things overseas that it perhaps wasn't able to do when it was under the State Department, when the information function was under the State Department before. Because while overseas the officer is responsible to the ambassador, he is also responsible to USIA headquarters in Washington.

But again, as in the case of the relationship between VOA and the Agency, the relationship between the USIA functional elements and the Department of State depends a great deal on the personalities of the leaders involved. This is the argument that I have with Henry Loomis. He contends that the Agency leadership is needed as a buffer between VOA and the two big elements of foreign policy, the White House and the State Department. Those of us who have experienced through the years the relationship between VOA and USIA, except when people like Henry Loomis are in charge at USIA, that we've needed more protection from our betters than we have from the White House and the State Department. As I said earlier, there are advantages and disadvantages to any of these arrangements or rearrangements.

To go back to the time that the creation of an International Communication Agency was being planned, several of us from the Voice, including Ken Giddens, went to see John Reinhardt before he was official. We laid out on the table our desires for a greater degree of independence. He certainly wasn't, as his first official act, going to give up a third of his organization. So before we left that afternoon, I said to John Reinhardt, “John, if you can't bring yourself to go to the extent that we have discussed here this afternoon, could you at least find a way to elevate the role and position of the Director of the Voice of America within the hierarchy of the Agency?” Because at that time, he was just another assistant director, along with all the area offices and IPS and whatever, even though he had this massive enterprise to manage. I said, “In terms of personnel and administration, policy, there are various differences and there are great responsibilities.”

He didn't say yes or no, but lo and behold, when the new reformed ICA came out, there were four associate directors, one of whom was the Director of VOA. So I thought we had gained something in that thing, and, of course, eventually VOA got its own personnel office, far bigger than is necessary, in my view, but we got one.

Q: It's now an associate director still, is it?

GROCE: Yes, the other three being Programs, Educational and Cultural Exchange, and Management.

Q: That was a strange aberration, wasn't it, that ICA business? I never knew whether that was imposed on Reinhardt by Jimmy Carter or whether it was Reinhardt's idea. Do you know?

GROCE: I don't know, but whoever had the idea, I think the reason for the change in name and shape was to try to make the people from CU feel that they were equal. Because if you just moved CU into what was then USIA, then it would look like they were just being absorbed into this great big organization, which is, of course, what happened, but at least the facade and the fact that they became an Associate Directorate gave a prestige to the unit that was roughly comparable to what they had in the State Department.

Q: I remember talking with Alexis Johnson about it one time. He said, “My goodness, we spent all these years building USIS as a symbol of cooperation and friendship and help to other countries, and here your people are now just destroying all that.” He said he was one of the pioneers who supported USIS. I recall our old friend Jerry Stryker was in Singapore at that time as PAO, and I understand he sent back a list about the whole thing.

GROCE: It was a funny message.

Q: But it was short-lived, wasn't it? It went out with Carter.

GROCE: When the new administration came in, they were determined to change the name back, much to my relief. But it didn't happen for several months. It was after we moved down to the new building that it was officially changed.

Q: Among others who favored going back to the old was Chuck Percy and others on the Hill.

There's a little bit of tape left, and you have it at your disposal, Cliff, if you want to philosophize.

GROCE: There are some anecdotes from the VOA days that I neglected to include, at least one of which I think is very funny, and it has to do with the strowger and what the strowger does and can do.

Strowgers used to be sought after by certain officials. Everybody wanted to have a strowger in his office, in the State Department and in Agency area offices and so on, the White House. One day, we were recording a “Press Conference USA,” which was a half-hour discussion program patterned along the lines of “Meet the Press” and “Face the Nation,” in which a prominent guest appears every week. Some of the reporters are ours, and some of the reporters are outsiders. One day we were recording an interview with Nicholas [de B.] Katzenbach, when he was Attorney General of the United States during the Johnson Administration. Suddenly, the phone rings on the producer's desk in the control room, and the producer picks it up. The voice at the other end says, “Let me have Nick Katzenbach.”

And the producer says, “I'm sorry, he's recording a program.”

“I know he's recording a program. I'm listening to it.” It was Lyndon Johnson! He got him out of the studio, in the control room, didn't like the way he had said something. He wanted him to go back and re-describe that situation, re-phrase the thing, because he was not satisfied. And like a sheepish schoolboy, Katzenbach goes back—he's a huge man—goes back in, sits down, and they have to go back and re-record part of this thing. But Lyndon Johnson was sitting in the White House, listening to this recording being made.

Q: He was a hard man to do business with.

GROCE: I also should have talked some about the marvelous days we had covering the space program, because that was one of our proudest achievements. Of course, that

was the time when Henry Loomis was in East Africa and bumped into this guy out in the middle of nowhere in the bush, and the guy had heard about the landing on the moon on the Voice of America. He didn't know Henry Loomis was from the Voice of America, but he said this guy listened to BBC, to Radio Moscow, to Radio Vatican. He listened to a variety of places, he was a very well-informed man, and he was really a leader in his community.

Q: Henry was an excellent public servant.

GROCE: Oh, absolutely!

Q: Later, when I went to work for him at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, I got caught in a political squeeze and resigned, but I still like and respect Henry, a guy who, in the old-fashioned way of wealthy people, feels he has a responsibility as a public servant.

GROCE: Noblesse oblige.

Q: He had two uncles whose names were Henry—Henry Stimson and another one, another Henry. So as a result, they decided not to use that. So Henry Loomis is his full legal name.

GROCE: Henry Stimson was Henry Loomis Stimson.

Q: That's right. There are many interesting stories about the Voice. Shall I throw in one quick one here? When the Russians invaded Hungary, Barmine, the head of the Russian service, led his whole staff down to the Hungarian service, not a word was spoken about what had happened, but just to stop by for coffee—marched his troops in and marched them out, and that was it.

GROCE: I never heard that story.

Q: A very touching story, really.

GROCE: I did talk to Henry about the stories that went around about VOA helping to incite the revolution in Hungary. He was in research at the time. He said that all the evidence they had was there was no such involvement of the Voice at all, that the Hungarian people were ready to blow, and so if John Foster Dulles said something and we reported it, if they consider that inciting, why, that was the extent to which it happened.

Q: Tom Tuch and I were talking the other day about our respective roles in jamming, especially when Khrushchev came to the United States. I learned about it first from Bob Mayer, who had a little listening device on the roof. Bob came down one day and said, "Jack, I think they've stopped jamming."

I said, "Well, okay, I'll put some calls in." We had some monitors, remember, around the world. I put calls in and couldn't reach any of them. I called up George Allen. Henry was out of town. I called up George Allen and said, "I think they've stopped jamming."

He said, "Goodness sakes. Confirm it if you can. I want to tell the White House."

So I couldn't reach a monitor, so I said, "Put in a call to Lee Brady in Moscow." Got a hold of Lee and said, "Lee, is it true?"

He said, "You bet it's true."

So with that, I called Allen and he went to the White House with it. The difficult part came, as you may recall, when they resumed jamming on a selective basis. Thank God for Wanda Allender Washburn. She was one of the special assistants, she and Ruth Walter Crook. It was a nightmare, because Barmine and company had to continue their regular broadcasting and then listen to tapes of what had been jammed and put down on paper what the topic was. Eisenhower personally was very interested, and these had to be daily reports to the White House on what they were jamming and not. It had significance, but I

don't know to this day how we did it, how Barmine and company did it. But Wanda was the one that I give credit to for organizing it and keeping track of it.

Tom was talking about his job in Moscow. He had to monitor the jammers. It had been on in Morse Code, and he had to learn Morse Code. But it was an astonishing period and one that I hope is not repeated.

End of interview